

# Japan Christian Activity News

PUBLISHED  
BY NCC J

ISSN:0021-4353

Property of  
Graduate Theological Union

#643 May 1987

JUN 4 1987

## CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTERS

From May 6 to 13, 1987 the Rev. Mune-toshi Maejima (NCCJ General Secretary), Dr. Mikio Sumiya (Asia Resource Center), and the Rev. Masaaki Nakajima, General Secretary of the United Church of Christ in Japan, visited The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (hereinafter called North Korea). The following is a joint report on the visit:

"While remembering the 36 years of Japan's colonization of Korea starting from 1910, it was our great journey of Shalom to be able to confess our many many sins of omission and commission as the very same Japanese who visited such unendurable pain and oppression on the people of Korea. We feel a great sense of responsibility as Japanese for the present division of Korea, with North and South divided against each other and kept under such immense tension. Within this context, while relations with South Korea have deepened, there are still no diplomatic ties with North Korea, thereby making its lands and peoples among the world's most distant from Japan even though we are geographical neighbors.

Our hearts have been filled with pain because we have not been able to maintain fellowship with Christians in North Korea. After giving extensive thought to what we Christians in Japan could do in community with our sisters and brothers in Christ in North Korea, we decided to make a visit. Our desire was to seek ways for the churches in Japan to bridge

the gap between North and South thereby contributing to peace in Asia.

The people of North Korea warmly welcomed us and made up a schedule for us that facilitated all of our wishes. We visited various cultural institutions and talked extensively with Mr. Hwang Jang Yop, Secretary and Mr. Chun Gun Chol, Secretary General of the Peace Unification Committee. We had opportunities to hear of today's conditions and government policies and to exchange opinions.

On May 10, we visited the Korean Christian Association and met the Rev. Ko Gi Jun, said encounter affording us the opportunity to discuss specific areas of cooperation that could be nurtured between our churches. Then we attended a home gathering in Pyongyang and worshipped with the Rev. Kim Un Bong and eight other Christians. We learned of the conditions in the area and have come to understand their strong desire for peace and unity, especially given the great pressure and tension that they continue to face under the burdens of division.

The next day after our arrival in Pyongyang we presented a gift Bible to President Kim Il Sung through the Master of Ceremonies, and indicated our purposes in making the visit. The evening of the day before our departure we were told through Mr. Lee Hong Ho, chairperson of the Cultural Coordinating Association for Foreign Countries and the person responsible for our itinerary, that President Kim understood our intentions and in response sent us a message in which he requested that we visit the People's Republic once

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL Room 24, 2-3-18 Nishiwaseda, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160 Japan

NOTE: Permission to reprint is granted to all media provided that credit is given and a copy is sent to the editors.



again.

Lastly we sent our appreciation to the many churches who prayed for Christian fellowship between our lands. May 15, 1987.

(Translation by JCAN)

---

## SEEKING SOLIDARITY

---

The Rev. Allan Boesak, President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, made a visit to Japan from his native South Africa. On the evening of May 1 he was the featured speaker in a meeting in Tokyo which was attended by about 400 people. His appeal was for the necessity of withdrawing all Japanese businesses from South Africa, which, by their presence, support the apartheid system of the Botha government. Although an anti-apartheid committee in Osaka had planned a meeting for May 2, Rev. Boesak could not attend because of the arrival of a telegram which outlined emergency situations that had come to impinge on the church in South Africa due to the extenuating political circumstances. However, he did find time to visit people in Sanya, Tokyo, and to meet with day laborers on the streets and talk with unemployed people in the area.

The following are closing remarks made at the Allan Boesak Tokyo meeting by Mr. Akira Kusahara of the Japan Anti-Apartheid Committee.

"Mr. Boesak, ten days before your arrival, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan invited Mr. Oliver Tambo, president of the ANC, (named an illegal liberation organization by the Japanese government) to meet with Prime Minister Nakasone. Mr. Nakasone assured Oliver Tambo of the Japanese Government's support for the ANC and promised him that the ANC could open a liaison office in Tokyo. On the same day, the Ministry of For-

eign Affairs arranged a meeting between President Tambo and presidents and executives of major Japanese corporations, the same ones which have often been criticized here and abroad for their being "partners-in-apartheid." It was only one or two years ago when this same Japanese government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, identified the ANC and your UDF as "terrorist organizations" and "organizations which advocate armed revolution."

Today, that same government and some of the corporations have begun to prepare for the "post-apartheid" period. The highly visible representations of history always move in this way. But those who are actively involved in the genuine making of history in the background, are the oppressed people of South Africa and neighboring countries continuing in their struggle for freedom and racial dignity with courage and determination, no matter what repression or assault they may be threatened with. Unless we recognize them as the true protagonists of history, we will remain uninvolved, having nothing to do with the challenges of history, nor with the struggles for freedom and racial dignity.

You have communicated to us, the anger, sufferings and aspirations of the hundreds and thousands of children, women, and men of South Africa. Their cries strengthen and encourage each and everyone of us who live in this land, who belong to different races, and who are divided, controlled, and antagonized by different forms of violence and oppression.

The government of Japan and Japanese corporations have started making plans to assure their continued gains in the "post-apartheid" period so as to continue reaping their profits that were built upon the base of the apartheid system. The total amount of trade with South Africa last year makes Japan second only to the United States in trading volume with your country and therefore with the United States oppressors of your people.



We are still honorary whites. How can a nation be truly liberated when it oppresses other people? Without the total destruction of the apartheid system, there can never be independence for the people of South Africa and neighboring countries; and I have to add, that there can never be freedom and genuine independence for ourselves who live on the other side of the globe. We hope that you will communicate to our friends of many different races in South Africa, our voice of commitment to a world without apartheid. We hope we can meet you again when South Africa has been truly liberated.

AMANDLA AWETHU!!

Tokyo - May 1, 1987




---

### EAST ASIAN WOMEN IN CONSULTATION

---

Working under the theme "Food, Freedom, and Justice - Mobilizing Women for Change," an East Asia Women's Conference was held at the Kyushu Christian Center in Fukuoka City, Japan between May 6 and 9 as sponsored by The Christian Conference of Asia in cooperation with the NCCJ. Fifty women from Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and India, along with Japanese delegates, came together in order to exchange experiences and insights for strengthening and networking for enhancement of the many and various women's struggles.

Within the context of the continuing dictatorial oppression in South Korea and the ongoing social and economic oppression existing in all other represented lands, women spoke courageously of their situations.

South Korean delegates reported on laboring women and farm women as the political issues relating to the new constitution continue to create more tensions in society. Under condi-

tions where female workers have to labor long hours with meager pay and where more women are forced to take part-time work for which there are no labor laws, Christian churches have supported women through negotiations with employers and they have also established nursery schools for working mothers.

When a women, who had used another person's name in order find a job, was arrested and sexually molested and degraded, the most demonic form of torture, such was brought to the light of day by the people of the churches who oppose such violent practices and support was thereby provided to her. Within the context of many other such incidences, people have started to take action in opposition to such violence on the part of the police establishment.

The conditions facing farming women who must work without land are such that they are driven further and further into debt. Thus more than half of the farming women were forced to sell their daughters to make good on their debts.

Many children are malnourished. Women go out to look for work in urban settings. The traditional family structure is thereby destroyed. Last year more than 100 farm women committed suicide by drinking agricultural chemicals. The failure of land reform has once again brought favor to the rich and agriculture is dominated by imports in which 99% of the cereal grains and 50% of the livestock are imported from the United States.

Farmers have organized to oppose American policies and have through this indicated the unfortunate results of importing agricultural goods into South Korea. The work of the Woman Peasants Movement was also introduced.

The seven delegates from Taiwan explained the political and social conditions under which the human rights of the people have been denied thro-



ugh the continued application of marshal law. Having had the experience of being a member of the Central Executive Committee, Mrs. Chou Ching-Yu Yao, a delegate to the Taiwan National Assembly, emphasized the importance of women's participation in politics in order to change society. There was also a report on the Taipei Rainbow Project for mountain tribal women, as their human rights are completely unobserved, as well as a report on the Care Center for political prisoners' families and the Women's Development Center for teaching job skills including family counselling for Japanese women in Taipei.

The seven delegates from Hong Kong shared their understandings of the political and economic situation in Hong Kong which is already deeply affected by the political changes that are to come in 1997 when Hong Kong is to be returned to the People's Republic of China. The younger generation hangs onto a weakening vision of a continuing capitalistic enclave within the larger communist society and there has been started a New Women's Council for the promotion of true liberation and women's rights.

Excellent preparations were made for presentations on biblical understandings of poverty as a means of bringing hope and light to women.

Corinne Kumar D'Souza from India added her understandings of the problems of women under the cast system and extended her vision from the perspective of peace and disarmament within a context of a continuing expansion of Asian militarization and the continued nuclearization of the world while emphasizing the necessity of feminist movements and solidarity among women.

There was particular focus on the struggle against the Alien Registration Law by the Korean community in Japan as presented by Park Seun Hee and Kim Jung Nyo.

Terumi Igarashi outlined the conditions under which buraku people live

as derived from her own experiences as a buraku women in Japan.

Discussions continued to deal with issues related to the lives of the Miike Coal miners after the mine disaster, and the Minamata mercury poisoning victims after the destruction of their human environment, as explanations were offered as to how such morbid discrimination and injustice in society is connected with the same mentality which allowed Japan to invade other Asian countries both in the nefarious past and in the economic wars of today.

Networking was encouraged for an exchange of information and support for women's work and for the struggle against injustice and for human welfare. The necessity of faith evaluations for building biblical understanding from the feminist perspective was proposed in order to discover the potential and possibilities for self-development and creation of a new community of liberation in Asia.

The conference was divided into small groups and as such made visits to churches, schools, and women's groups for continuing dialogue with the women of Kyushu. The conference groupings then moved to Tokyo.

---

## CHINA FROM A WHEELCHAIR

---

The NCCJ China Visit (April 27-May 9) by an eight member team, completed a journey of "learning from the churches in China." After visiting Shanghai, Haugzhou, Nanjing, and Beijing, Ms. Sadako Matsunaga reports on her observations from a wheelchair.

This trip was arranged by the NCCJ International Church Cooperation Committee in continuation of the China--Japan church fellowship started in 1983. We attended a Sunday service in Shanghai. There were about 700 seats and about 1200 people attended the first service. There were two



services that day; one from 7 in the morning and the other from 9:00. A total of 3000 people attended church that Sunday morning. Many of them were older women but one pastor among six of the ministers of the church said that baptisms of young people were tending to increase.

The form of worship was similar to the forms we are accustomed to. Baptism was performed according to individual wishes. For some this would mean total emersion and for others there would be only the use of water in its symbolic form. Pastors were primarily older persons but they are trying to encourage persons from the younger generation to enter into education for the ministry.

We visited various theological seminaries. It was impressive to find so many women students in the theological schools. The Nanjing Theological seminary was the largest with new buildings and a beautiful library. The Peace Museum commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Rape of Nanjing, was most impressive. More Japanese tourist should take a pilgrimage to the place where 300,000 people were sacrificed to the alter of brutality by the Japanese military. White stones were located on the thirteen primary locations where actual genocide took place. Looking at those stones I could hear the cries of people. With this I could only confess our sin and pray for peace, by crying out for "NO MORE NANJINGS."

More high-rise apartments are going up everywhere. The main instrument of transportation is the bicycle. Whenever I would disassembled my wheelchair a crowd would gather around me as they were more interested in the wheelchair than anything else.

In Nanjing we visited a children's welfare center. It was explained that handicapped children were cared for in institutions that separated them from their parents. My heart sank when I saw so many small children without parents lying on their beds. Those in the churches were

also very interested in the work of the NCCJ Committee on the Handicapped and the Church.

When we travelled by train from Shanghai to Haugzhou I saw a beautiful sunset coloring all things on the horizon. The scenes of farming, which we have already lost contact with, brought back warm memories of a time not so far gone. I felt awed by the grandeur of the sun, but at the same time it reminded me of the folly of Japanese militarism which raped this land and destroyed so many human lives. The multiple hues of the sunset were so powerfully radiant as they were refracted by the blood of all those killed in the invasion. I prayed that such would never be repeated on the face of the earth.

---

#### CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN JAPAN

---

Between May 14-15, Osaka, Japan was host to the Centennial Celebration of the Nihon Seikokai (Anglican Church in Japan). With the Archbishop of Canterbury present, it started on the evening of the 14th with an address by Primate Bishop E. L. Browning from the U.S.A.

The highlight of the whole program was a celebration of the eucharist at St. Mary's Cathedral (Roman Catholic) in Osaka, attended by 2,800 people which included a great number of ecumenical and overseas guests. Among the guests from Japan proper, were the Rev. Kunihiro Sato-NCCJ moderator, the Rev. Munetoshi Maejima-NCCJ General Secretary, and priests and bishops from the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches. Among the international guests were bishops and priests from Melanesia, Papua New Guinea, Sabah, Hong Kong, Macao, Bangladesh, South Korea, and the Philippines.

A symposium of clergy was held on the 15th. In the afternoon of the 16th,



a forum on peace was held by the Men's Society of the Osaka Diocese. It was well organized and well attended by 350 people. It provided a good opportunity for sharing of views on peace issues in Asia and Japan in today's world. The main theme of the forum was, "Lord, Make Us Instruments Of Thy Peace." Participants were divided into the following working groups; Minority Issues, Asia and Peace, Peace Education, Peace from the Perspectives of the A-bomb Victims, and Learning Peace from the Scriptures.

Bishop Saneaki Nakamura of the Diocese of Okinawa gave the opening address for the forum, and made the point that we are all the Children of God and not the children of the emperor of Japan. We may be called disloyal, but it is our faith in the God of Jesus Christ that we must adhere to. Bishop Ichiro Kikawada, the Primate of the Seikokai, expressed a determination to work in peace-making over the coming years.

By: Shigeo Yamano

---

#### MEDICAL COMMISSION CONSULTATION

---

The Northeast Asian Regional Consultation for the Christian Medical Commission of the World Council of Churches was held in Kyoto, April 21-26, 1987. Fifty persons: medical doctors, nurses, and church workers, came together from South Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, India, and Japan including Dr. Bui Chi Trung of Vietnam, studying in Japan.

Directed by the staff of Asian Health Institute located in Nagoya, participants exchanged understandings as to Christian medical work from a holistic approach centered around healing. Sun-Hye Lee, a nurse from the Severance Hospital, Seoul, Korea, dealt with the Role of the Church in Healing Ministries while Mona Lo from

Hong Kong talked on Effecting Changes in Child Health Programmes in a City of Plenty. Dr. Lu Wei Bo, of the Chinese Association for Integrated Medicine, Beijing, China, emphasized the importance of integrating traditional Chinese medicine and modern medicine. He explained the importance for diagnosis of the pulse and tongue for their holographic functions, pointing out clinical medicine is one of the aspects most suitable for this integration. Dr. Masami Katayama, Tottori Red Cross Hospital explained the integration of both Chinese and modern medicines through his experiences in Taiwan mountain region tribes and Kmehr Village on the Thai Cambodia border.

"Medicine in Industrialized Society" was the theme taken by Dr. Shunichi Yamamoto of the University of Tokyo as he dealt with various health problems caused by industrialization which are common in South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Dr. Tomoaki Tsuchida, of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture in Nagoya, discussed "Basic Mahayana Buddhism and Ideas Concerning Healing and Wholeness."

Small group discussions focused on the "Roles of Christian Hospitals" and the churches in the coming 10 years. The group visited the Yodogawa Christian Hospital in Osaka, and was especially interested in its program for the terminal care. Especially was this the case since in many Asian societies cancer has become the number one killer.

The Rev. Tom Takami gave the closing vespers each day at the conference. He summarized the discussions and at the same time was able to integrate the fullness of the sessions into a whole that filled those in the healing professions with a new sense of commitment to their cause as they seek to provide the healing of both the physical and spiritual food of life.

For further details write: The Asian Health Institute Foundation



## AN APPEAL TO CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNING THE PROPOSED "STATE SECRETS LAW"

Last December the Cabinet of the Japanese Government approved a budget in which defense spending exceeded the "one percent of the GNP" limit. With this effective brake removed, there is grave concern that defense spending will rise ever increasingly as Japan rushes down the road to becoming a major military power. Although the government has encountered strong resistance in pushing its tax reforms through the Diet, the heart of the tax reform bill is a large scale indirect tax intended, it is thought, to finance a major defense build-up.\* Moreover, the ruling Liberal-Democrat Party (LDP) has reintroduced into the Diet deliberations its "State Secrets Law," which, under the guise of preventing spying, would deprive all citizens of the right to know about defense and diplomatic matters, and thus silence the voices of the people that are in opposition to militarization.

In the background of the proposed "State Secrets Law" lurks the problem of controlling information related to Japan's participation in the SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative) project. Participating in the "Star Wars Project," as SDI is popularly known, would violate the peace commitments of the Japanese Constitution and endanger the self-determined, democratic, and peaceful development of Japan's science, technology, and education.

We believe in Jesus Christ as Lord of this world. Accordingly, we feel strong misgivings that the above actions, along with Cabinet level official visits to Yasukuni Shrine and the Ministry of Education's notification to schools to display the "Hinomaru" flag and to sing the "Kimigayo" anthem, are linked to state power absolutism. As persons who believe that in Christ, God brings together peace and justice, we fear that the above policies will violate our basic human rights and thus further oppress the powerlessness of those who are already denied their rights.

During the war years (1937-45) we Christians were afraid of being treated as disloyal "non-citizens" and thus cooperated with the war effort, thereby helping to inflict great suffering on the peoples of Asia and on those opposing the war here at home. After the war ended, we failed to acknowledge our responsibility, saying that we did not know what was happening because we were not told the truth.

To recall these matters now pains our hearts and we therefore do not wish to repeat these errors. We desire, rather, to obey God's imperatives of peace and justice and to resist current movements in the direction of again becoming a major military power, and to act together to defend and realize the values of peace, democracy, and human rights.

The Lord said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." We are called to share in this blessing. Thus we appeal to each Christian church and organization to turn to God's Word and consider together what can be done, to promote all possible actions for peace and justice in each and every location, and in so doing, let us inform and support one another in all that we do.

April 16, 1987 - Kunihiro Sato - Moderator, NCCJ

\*The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) officially scrapped this bill May 13 due to opposition.



The Kanagawa Association of the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan) is represented in this photograph in their demonstration against possible enactment of the "State Secrets Law"

Photograph by:  
The Rev. Yoichi Kishimoto.

## "MOTHER'S FACE"

Mother, for whom I have never had a chance to give a single grain of rice,  
I wonder what you are thinking in your grave.  
As the wife of a farmer and as a widow you lived.  
You never rested in those months and years.  
Some say your life was like the night.  
Others say it was like the winter.

When I was imprisoned I wanted to see you even if only once.  
I wanted to cook warm rice for you even if only once.  
I set aside a moment during each and every day to look in your direction.  
And now I am straddling your grave,  
Out of which not even a single blade of grass sprouts.

In the spring fields, when you went hand-over-hand across barley furrows,  
When the icy cold of the early spring winds froze the marrow of your bones,  
When the sight of your eyes faded,  
When your front teeth fell out one by one,

I could not lift a glass for you.  
I could not give you fine looking dentures.  
Your life passed rapidly night after night.  
Was this because of me or because of another?

\* \* \*

The above is a translation of a Poem written by Kim Myoung Shik.  
It appears on the first page of his new book, SHIMON KYOHI NO SHISO. (Some Thoughts on Refusing to be Fingerprinted), Akashi Shobo. 1987

EDITORIAL STAFF: MUNETOSHI MAEJIMA, AIKO YOKOYA, ANTHONY CARTER

With the significant change in the exchange rates JCAN is in financial trouble. Any contributions would be very greatly appreciated. - THE EDITOR